COMPLAINT

AND

ANSWER

شکوہ و جوابِ شکوہ

IQBAL

BY

A. J. ARBERRY

SH. MUHAMMAD ASHRAF

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Translated out of the Urdu into English Verse

BY

A. J. ARBERRY
Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic in the
University of Cambridge

K. M. B—

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PREFACE

The *Shikwa* and the *Jawab-i-Shikwa*, of which a new verse translation is offered in the following pages, are among the most popular of Iqbal's poems; they are deservedly celebrated, for they were among the first to bring their author fame as an advocate of Islamic reform and rebirth. The date of their composition can be fixed very accurately by a reference to contemporary events contained in the second of them; when Iqbal wrote—

"Now the onslaught of the Bulgars sounds the trumpet of alarm" he was commemorating the invasion of Turkey by Bulgaria in the late autumn of 1912, an attack which threatened at one time to penetrate as far as Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire and the last home of the Caliphate. These poems were therefore

composed four years after Iqbal's return from Europe. They mark the beginning of that remarkable career as philosopher and poet which brought Iqbal ever-increasing renown; until long before his death in 1938 he was recognised as the leading thinker of Islam in India and the greatest figure in Urdu literature. It is all the more interesting to find him adumbrating in these early pieces that theory of Selfhood (*Khudi*) and Selflessness (*Bekhudi*) which later played such an important part in his religious and political philosophy.

The central theme of both poems is the decay of Islam from its former greatness, and the measures to be adopted if it was to re-establish its authority and regain its vitality. The subject was, of course, no new one; ever since the decline and final extinction of the Moghul Empire, Muslims in India had been searching their minds and their consciences for the

explanation of so lamentable a disaster. Nor were Indian Muslims alone in deploring the seeming collapse of Islamic civilisation; their co-religionists further West, from Persia to Morocco, had been occupied with the same self-examination. But in these two poems Iqbal stated the problem in singularly arresting directness; the literary form chosen for its exposition, a dialogue between the poet, as spokesman for Muslims the world over, and God—this dramatic presentation of the common dilemma made an immediate and compelling appeal to Iqbal's public, an appeal moreover which has lost nothing of its force in the intervening years.

To make a worthy translation of these poems into English is certainly no easy task. To begin with, the present translator has to confess to a very inadequate knowledge of Urdu, the language used by Iqbal on this occasion. Left to his own devices, he

would have been obliged to abandon the attempt; but the publisher, Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, most kindly procured for him a literal rendering of the originals into English prose, ably executed by Mr. Mazhar-ud-Din Siddiqi, to whom the grateful and cordial thanks of the writer are hereby expressed. But that is by no means the end of the matter; Iqbal naturally illustrated his discourse with metaphors and references familiar enough to those accustomed to read Urdu poetry, but in many instances utterly strange, indeed outlandish to an English audience. Rather than impose on the poet, transformations of which he would certainly and justly have disapproved, the translator has preferred to reproduce his model as closely and as faithfully as he could, appending notes to his version to light up the dark passages wherever they are found.

THE COMPLAINT

[شکوہ]

Why must I forever suffer loss, oblivious to gain,

Why think not upon the morrow, drowned in grief for yesterday?

Why must I attentive heed the nightingale's lament of pain?

Fellow-bard, am I a rose, condemned to silence all the way?

No; the burning power of song bids me be bold and not to faint;

Dust be in my mouth, but God—He is the theme of my complaint.

True, we are forever famous for our
habit to submit;

Yet we tell our tale of grief, as by our
grief we are constrained.

We are but a muted lyre; yet a
lament inhabits it—

If a sigh escapes our lips, no more
can sorrow be contained.

God, give ear to the complaint of us,
Thy servants tried and true;

Thou art used to songs of praise; now
hear a note of protest too.

In Thy everlasting Essence Thou
wast from eternity;

Bright the bloom bedecked the
garden; undiffused the scent
abode;

Lord of universal favour, let impartial
justice be—

Could the rose's perfume scatter with
no breeze to waft abroad?

Peace of mind and quiet spirit won
we of our labours glad,

Else the folk of Thy Beloved—should
they be accounted mad?

Strange indeed the spectacle Thy world supplied before our days,

Here men bowed them down to stones, there paid they reverence to trees;

Only to the visual image was attuned the human gaze—

How could hearts adore a God no eye percipient may seize?

Well Thou knowest, was there any anywhere to name Thy Name?

By the Muslim's strong right arm Thy purpose to fulfilment came.

Though the Seljuks had their empire, the Turanians their sway,

Though the Chinese ruled in China, the Sassanians in Iran,

Though the Greeks inhabited broad, fruitful acres in their day

And the Jews possessed their cubit, and the Christians owned their span,

Who upraised the sword of battle in Thy Name's most sacred cause,

Or who strove to right the ruined world by Thy most hallowed laws?

It was we and we alone who marched,
Thy soldiers, to the fight,

Now upon the land engaging, now
embattled on the sea,

The triumphant Call to Prayer in
Europe's churches to recite,

Through the wastes of Africa to
summon men to worship Thee.

All the glittering splendour of great
emperors we reckoned none;

In the shadow of our glinting swords
we shouted, "God is One!"

All our life we dedicated to the dire
distress of war;

When we died, we died exultant for
the glory of Thy Name;

Not to win a private empire did we
draw the swords we bore—

Was it in the quest of riches to earth's
frontiers that we came?

Had our people striven for the sake
of worldly goods and gold

Would they then have shattered idols
they might gainfully have sold?

We were rocks immovable when in the
field we took our stand,

And the bravest-hearted warriors by
our thrust were swept away;

It sufficed us to enrage, if any
gainsaid Thy command,

Then we hurled us on their cannons,
took their swordpoints but for
play.

Into every heart we struck the
impress of Thy Unity

And beneath the dagger's lightning
preached the Message, Lord, of
Thee.

Tell us this, and tell us truly—who
uprooted Khyber's gate?

Or who overthrew the city where
great Cæsar reigned in pride?

Who destroyed the gods that hands
of others laboured to create,

Who the marshalled armies of the
unbelievers drove aside?

Who extinguished from the altars of
Iran that sacred flame,

Who revived the dimmed remembrance
of Yazdan's immortal Name?

Strove there ever other nation in the cause of Thee alone,

Bore there ever other people battle's anguish for Thy sake?

Whose the sword that seized the world, and ruled it as its very own?

Whose the loud Allahu Akbar that compelled the earth to wake?

Whose the dread that kept the idols cowering and terrified

So that, heads cast down and humbled, "He is God, the One," they cried?

In the press of mortal combat if the
hour of worship came

Then the people of Hejaz, to Mecca
turning, bowed in prayer;

King Mahmud, Ayaz the slave—
their rank in service was the
same,

Lord and servant—at devotion never
difference was there.

Slave and master, rich and needy—all
the old distinctions gone,

Unified in adoration of Thy Presence,
they were one.

In the Hall of Space and Being, at the dawn and eventide

Circulated we like goblets with the Wine of Faith replete;

Still we roved o'er plain and mountain, spread Thy Message far and wide—

Is it known to Thee, if ever we returned to own defeat?

Desert after desert spanning, faring on through sea on sea,

In the Ocean of the Shadows our strong coursers watered we.

We erased the smudge of falsehood
from the parchment firmament,

We redeemed the human species from
the chains of slavery;

And we filled the Holy Kaaba with
our foreheads humbly bent,

Clutching to our fervent bosoms the
Koran in ecstasy.

Yet the charge is laid against us we
have played the faithless part;

If disloyal we have proved, hast
Thou deserved to win our heart?

Other creeds claim other peoples, and
they have their sinners too;

There are lowly men among them, and
men drunken with conceit;

Some are sluggards, some neglectful,
some are vigilant and true;

Multitudes disdain Thy Name in
loathing utter and complete;

But the showers of Thy mercy other
thirsting souls assuage,

Only on the hapless Muslims falls the
lightning of Thy rage.

Hark, the idols in the temples shout,
"The Muslims are no more,"

Jubilant to see the guardians of the
Kaaba's shrine depart;

The world's inn is emptied of those
singing cameleers of yore,

Vanished is their caravan, Koran close-
pressed to reverent heart.

Disbelief is loud with laughter; art
Thou deaf, indifferent?

Disregardest Thou Thy Unity, as if it
nothing meant?

Not of this are we complaining, that
their coffers overflow

Who have not the wit or grace of
converse in society;

But that infidels should own the
houris and the palaces — ah, woe!

While the wretched Muslims must with
promises contented be.

Now no more for us Thy favours and
Thy old benevolence —

How and wherefore is Thy pristine
kindliness departed hence?

Why no more are worldly riches
among Muslims to be found,

Since Thy power is as of old beyond
compute and unconfined?

If Thou willest, foaming fountains
from the desert's breast can bound

And the rippling mirage may the
traveller in the forest blind.

All we have is jeers from strangers,
public shame, and poverty —

Is disgrace our recompense for laying
down our lives for Thee?

So; it is on others only that the world
its love bestows;

We, who walk Thy chosen path — to
us a phantom world is left.

Be it so; bid us be gone, and let the
earth belong to those,

Yet protest not that the earth of
Unity is now bereft.

For no other cause we live but Thy
remembrance to maintain;

When the saki is departed, can the
winecup yet remain?

Gone is now the thronged assembly,
and Thy lovers too are gone,

Ended are the midnight sighings,
silenced dawn's deep threnody;

They bestowed their hearts upon Thee,
and with their reward passed
on;

Scarcely were Thy faithful seated
when they were dismissed from
Thee.

So Thy lovers came, so with the
promise of "To-morrow" went —

Now come, seek them with the lantern
of Thy beauty's blandishment;

Laila's pangs are still the same, Qais
yearns as fiercely as of old,

Still amid the forests and the vales
of Nejd the fleet deer run,

Beauty lures the same as ever, hearts
deep passions still enfold,

Still abide the folk of Ahmad, still Thou
art their Lord, the One;

Then what means Thy high displeasure,
since its cause is all unknown?

What denotes it, that Thine eye is
turned in wrath upon Thy own?

Did we ever shun Thee, or Arabia's
Messenger forsake?

Did we tire of idol-breaking, and to
idol-making turn?

Did we cry an end to passion, growing
weary of love's ache?

Did we quit the path of Salman, cease
from Qarani to learn?

Still the fire of "God is Greatest" in
our hearts we keep ablaze,

Still Bilal the Abyssinian guides us in
our daily ways.

It may be that Love's sweet manners
are perchance no more observed,

And the path of acquiescence leads no
longer hearts resigned;

Haply the heart's Qibla-pointing
compass from its course has
swerved,

And the ancient law of faithfulness
has lost its power to bind;

Yet Thou too, alas, art changed, now
us, now others favouring;

Monstrous as it is to say, Thy love is
such a fickle thing!

On the summit of Faran Thou madest
Faith complete and whole,

Tookest captive hearts a thousand
with a single, simple sign;

Thou it was that Love's quintessence
set afire, a blazing coal,

Flamed the assembly with the ardour
of Thy loveliness divine.

Why is it, that in our bosoms not a
spark remains to-day?

We are still the same burnt chattels;
what, hast Thou forgotten, pray?

In the vale of Nejd no longer may
those clanging chains be heard,

Qais no more awaits distracted Laila's
litter to behold;

Vanished are those passionate yearnings; we are dead, our hearts
interred;

Gone the light of the assembly, the
abode is dark and cold.

Joyous day, when Thou returnest in
Thy beauty and grace

And unbashfully revealst to our
gathering Thy face!

Strangers sit within the garden, quaffing wine beside the stream;

Glass in hand they sit and listen to the cuckoo song of Spring.

Far from the commotioned meadow we sit silently and dream,

Dream, Thy lovers, of Thy coming, and the cry of "He, the King!"

Reawaken in Thy moths the eager joy to be aflame,

Bid again the ancient lightnings brand our bosoms with Thy Name!

Turns anew the wandering people to
Hejaz their bridle-string,

Skyward lifts the wingless nightingale
the lilting love of flight,

In the garden every blossom fragrance
—drenched is quivering.

Strike the silent lute, long eager for
Thy plectrum to alight —

String-imprisoned melodies await Thy
touch to sing in choir ;

Sinai is trembling, trembling to be
ravished by Thy fire.

Grant at last Thy sore-tried people in
their difficulties ease,

Make the ant of little substance peer
of Solomon to be ;

Love is grown too rare and costly —
cheapen its exalted fees ;

Turn our India's temple-squatters into
Muslims true to Thee.

See, the stream of blood is pouring
from our griefs, so long suppressed ;

Hark, the cry of pain is throbbing in
our dagger-riven breast.

Now the secret of the garden by the
rose's scent is spread;

Shame it is, the garden's blossoms
should themselves the traitor play!

Now the garden's Lyre is broken, and
the rose's bloom-time sped,

And the minstrels of the garden from
their twigs have winged away;

Yet one nightingale sings on there,
rapt by his own melody,

In his breast the plangent music tosses
still tempestuously.

All the ring-doves from the branches
of the cypresses have flown,

And the petals of the blossoms flutter
down and take to flight;

And the garden's ancient walks, how
desolate they are and lone;

Ravished of their leafy robes, the
boughs stand naked to the light.

Still he sings forlorn, all heedless of
the season's changing mood;

Oh, that someone in the garden his
sad anthem understood!

Life is joyless now, and death no
comfort promises to bring;

To remember ancient sorrows is the
sole delight I know.

In the mirror of my mind what gems
of thought are shimmering,

In the darkess of my breast what
shining revelations glow!

Yet no witness in the garden may the
miracle attest;

Not a tulip there lies bleeding with a
a brand upon its breast,

Break, hard hearts, to hear the carol
of this nightingale forlorn ;

Wake, dull hearts, to heed the clamour
and the clangour of this bell ;

Rise, dead hearts, by this new compact
of fidelity reborn ;

Thirst, dry hearts, for the old vintage
whose sweet tang you knew so
well.

Though the jar was cast in Persia, in
Hejaz the wine first flowed ;

And though Indian the song be, from
Hejaz derives the mode.

THE ANSWER

[جواب شکوہ]

Speech that issues from the heart a
magic influence exerts;

Wingless though the discourse be, yet
it has power to soar on high;

Holy is its origin, and so its gaze to
heaven converts,

And though from the dust it rises, it
can overpass the sky.

Arrogant and cunning was my love,
and on such mischief bent

That the very walls of heaven fell
down before its wild lament.

Listening, the ancient Sphere said,
"Someone seems to be about";

Cried the Planets, "There *is* someone,
in the upper ether pure";

"Not so lofty," called the Moon.
"Down on the earth there, not a
doubt";

"No," the Milky-Way retorted. "He
is hiding here, for sure."

Guardian Rizwan, he if any, my
complaint distinctly heard;

"He is man, just newly driven out of
Eden," he averred.

(۳) All the angels in amazement shouted,
“Why, whose voice is it?”

Dwellers in the firmament were baffled
by the mystery.

“Shall a mortal man aspire in our
high firmament to sit?

Can that little speck of dust take
wings, and soar so loftily?

They have clean forgot their manners,
those inhabitants of earth;

What effrontery, what rudeness for
such things of lowly birth!

So enormous is their impudence, at God Himself they rail,

Those fine progeny of Adam unto whom the Angels bowed.

Well they know of Quality and Quantity—they cannot fail;

As for being humble—for that secret they are far too proud.

Mighty airs they give themselves because they have the trick of speech;

When it comes to delicacy, that is far beyond their reach."

Came a Voice: "Ah, pitiable is the
story thou hast told;

Sure, thy cup is overflowing with the
tears that never cease.

High as heaven has the loud thunder
of thy cry impassioned rolled;

In what impudence of language thy
distraction finds release!

Thanks at least for this, that thy
complaint was beautifully phrased,

And the creature to his Maker has in
conversation raised.

We would fain be bountiful, but no
petitioner is there;

When no traveller approaches, how
can We guide on the way?

Free to all Our loving kindness, none
is worthy of Our care—

Even We could never fashion a new
Adam of such clay.

Were there any to receive it, We
would give a royal throne;

A new world We have to offer, were
one earnest seeker known.

Hands are impotent and nerveless,
hearts unfaithed and infidel,

The Community a heartbreak to
their Prophet and a shame;

Gone the idol-breakers, in their
places idol-makers dwell;

Abrahams their fathers were; the
children merit Azar's name.

New and strange the band of
drinkers, and their wine is strange
and new,

A new shrine to house their Kaaba,
new and strange the idols too.

Once the tulip of the desert was of
elegance the queen,

In the season of the roses reigned
her loveliness supreme;

Then in every Muslim eye the burning
love of God was seen,

The Beloved you name as fickle was
the heart adoring's dream.

If you will, with one more constant a
new bond of service sign;

The communion of the Prophet in a
narrower space confine.

Very heavy on your spirits weighs the charge of morning prayer;

Liefer far would you be sleeping, than rise up to worship Me.

Ramadan is too oppressive for your tempers free to bear;

Tell me now, do you consider *that* the law of loyalty?

Nations come to birth by Faith; let Faith expire, and nations die;

So, when gravitation ceases, the thronged stars asunder fly.

Why, you are a people utterly bereft of every art;

Not a nation in the world so lightly spurns its native place;

You are like a barn where lightnings nestle, and will not depart;

You would sell your fathers' graveyards, nor account such traffick base;

Making profit out of tombstones has secured you such renown—

Why not set up shop in idols, if you chance to hunt some down?

Who erased the smudge of falsehood
from the parchment firmament?

Who redeemed the human species
from the chains of slavery?

Who once filled the Holy Kaaba with
their foreheads lowly bent,

Clutching to their fervent bosoms the
Koran in ecstasy?

Who were they? They were your
fathers; as for now, why, what are
you,

Squatting snug, serenely waiting for
to-morrow to come true?

Did you say that Muslims must with
promises contented be?
That is a complaint unfounded, and
by commonsense abhorred;

The Creator's law is justice, out of
all eternity—
Infidels who live like Muslims surely
merit Faith's reward.

There is scarcely one amongst you
after Paradise aspires;
There is not a Moses living, though
unquenched are Sinai's fires.

One and common are the profit and
the loss the people bear,

One and common are your Prophet,
your religion, and your creed,

One the Holy Sanctuary, one Koran,
one God you share;

But to act as one, and Muslims—that
would every bound exceed.

Here sectarianism triumphs, class and
caste there rule the day;

Is it thus you hope to prosper, to
regain your ancient sway?

Who abandoned the example of the
Chosen Messenger?

Who took temporal advantage as
their touchstone of success?

Who are dazzled by strange customs,
alien usages prefer?

For the manners of their fathers who
a faint disgust profess?

In your hearts there is no ardour, in
your spirits feeling none;

As regards the Prophet's Message, why,
with that you've long since done.

Now, if any stand to worship in the
mosques, it is the poor,
Aud if any bear the pains of holy
fasting, it is they;
They alone Our Name revere, and Our
remembrance keep secure;
That your misdeeds may be hidden,
still they labour and they pray.

Drunken with the pride of riches,
wealthy men neglect God's due;
The communion of Islam lives on,
because the poor are true.

Now no more the preacher's message
from a ripened judgment springs,

Quenched the lightning of his spirit,
out the lantern of his word;

Lifeless hangs the Call to Prayer, with
no Bilal to lend it wings;

While philosophy spins on, Ghazali's
lectures go unheard.

'Silenced is the voice of worship,' the
deserted mosques lament;

'Where are now the brave Hejazis
men of godly, true intent?'

Loud the cry goes up, 'The Muslims?
They are vanished, lost to view!'

We re-echo, 'Are true Muslims to be
found in any place?'

Christian is your mode of living, and
your culture is Hindoo;

Why, such Muslims to the Jews would
be a shame and a disgrace.

Sure enough, you have your Syeds,
Mirzas, Afghans, all the rest;

But can you claim you are Muslims,
if the truth must be confessed?

Ever truthful, ever fearless was the
Muslim in his speech,

Strong and sure his sense of justice,
clean of partiality;

High exalted was his courage, far
above the common reach,

And sweet modesty the dew was that
refreshed his nature's tree;

Of his wine the liquid essence by self-
naughting was distilled.

And his joy was in self-emptying the
flask his Maker filled.

Every Muslim was a lancet poised to
sever falsehood's vein,

In the mirror of his being ceaseless
action's lustre shone ;

In his own right arm he trusted, by
his strength he could attain,

And while you are scared of dying,
he had fear of God alone.

If the child learns not the knowledge
that has made his father sage,

Then what right has he by merit to
his father's heritage ?

You are all intoxicated with the joy
of fleshly ease;
Are you Muslims? What, is this the
way Islam would have you tread?
Ali's poverty you will not, Uthman's
wealth you dare not seize —
What relationship of spirit links you
to your glorious dead?
For the fact that they were Muslims
they were honoured in their day;
You, who have abandoned the Koran,
are spurned and cast away.

You are wroth with one another, they
were kindly, merciful;

You, who sin, see sins in others, they
concealed their brothers' sin;

Be the Pleiades your dwelling, if they
are attainable,

Yet your souls must be in order, and
with them you should begin.

They possessed the realm of China,
they ascended Persia's throne;

You have not their manly honour, and
are great in words alone.

Self-destruction is your fashion, noble
self-esteem was theirs ;

You would flee from brotherhood, a
brotherhood for which they died ;

Yours the tongue that idly blabs,
theirs was the hand that greatly
dares ;

You are fain to pluck a bud, they
mastered all the garden wide.

Nations to this day rehearse the
legend of their loyalty,

And their truth still stands inscribed
upon the scroll of history.

On your people's far horizon like a
star you shone so bright,
Till, by India's garish idols lured, to
Brahmans you were turned;
You forsook the nest that nursed you,
lifted by the love of flight,
But your youth were void of action,
and to doubt the Faith they
learned;
Education and refinement from all
fetters set them free,
Brought them forth from their own
Kaaba to embrace idolatry.

Qais, if so he pleases, may endure the
desert's solitude,

Or become a city-dweller, roam no
more the empty waste;

Qais may choose the one or other in
the madness of his mood—

This is sure and certain, Laila must
unveil her beauty chaste;

End the protests of injustice, cease
the cries of tyranny—

Why shall loveliness in bondage
languish, seeing love is free?

This new age is like a lightning, setting every stook ablaze;

Not a desert, not a garden is in safety from its blast;

The new fire elects for fuel peoples of the ancient days,

The communion of the Prophet joins the general holocaust;

Ah, but if the faith of Abraham again would brightly show,

Where the flames are at their fiercest, there a garden fair would grow!

6) Let the gardener not be downcast to
descry the garden's plight;

Soon the starlight of the blossoms shall
the naked boughs adorn,

And the choking weeds and brambles
will have vanished out of sight,

And where martyrs shed their life-
blood crimson roses will be born.

Look upon the deep vermillion flooding
all the eastern sky—

It is your horizon, glowing to behold
your sun arise.

There are nations in Life's garden that
have gathered in their fruit,

Others shared not in the harvest, and
are swept by autumn's gales;

Multitudes of trees there stand, some
green, some withered to the root,

Myriads as yet lie hidden in the womb
that never fails;

After centuries of tending soars Islam,
a mighty tree,

Fruitful yet, a splendid symbol of
immense vitality.

8) From the dust of a fixed homeland is
thy skirt forever free,

Thou a Joseph art whose Canaan is in
every Egypt found ;

Still thy caravan is gathered, onward
still the march must be,

All thy baggage for the journey is the
bell's compelling sound.

Yea, a candle-tree thou art, and in
the flame thy deep roots thrust ;

By the shadow of thy thought To-
morrow's cares are burned to dust.

Though Iran should wane and perish,
thou shalt never pass away,

For the wine's intoxication in the
beaker does not lie;

From the story of the Tartar horde it
stands out clear as day

That the idol-house itself the Kaaba's
guardians may supply.

On Time's ocean thou sustainest the
frail vessel of The True;

This new age is wrapped in shadows,
but thy star shines faintly through.

30) Now the onslaught of the Bulgars
sounds the trumpet of alarm,

Screaming to the heedless sleepers
news of an awakening;

Thou supposest it the tiding of fresh
grief and mortal harm,

Yet it can thy self-denial and thy
pride to testing bring.

Wherefore fearest thou the neighing
of the warsteeds of the foe?

Never shall Truth's light be doused,
for all God's enemies may blow.

The reality thou art is hidden from
the peoples' eyes;

The bright cavalcade of Being has
most urgent need of thee;

It requires thy burning breath, Time's
sinews to revitalise,

And thy kingdom is the star that rules
the Future's destiny.

Where is now the time for leisure?
Mighty labours yet await,

Ere the light of the One Godhead all
the world irradiate.

Thou art like the scent imprisoned in
a bud; thyself release!

Load thy pack upon thy shoulder, fan
the meadow with thy breeze.

To a mighty desert let thy insubstantial
mote increase.

From a murmuring wave become the
roaring tempest of the seas.

With the power of love triumphant
life the lowly from their shame;

Light the world, too long in darkness,
with Muhammad's radiant name.

Were it not for this fair blossom,
songless were the nightingale,

The sweet rosebud in Time's garden
would no more smile tenderly ;

Without him to play the Saki, wine
and vessel both would fail,

Faith in God the One would perish,
and yourselves would cease to be.

By this name the great pavilion of
the skies is held in place,

To this name the pulse of Being
quivers yet through boundless
Space.

In the sea's caressing billows, in the
savage storm no less,

In the prairie, in the mountain, in the
valley, in the field,

In the cities of far China, in Morocco's
wilderness,

In the faith of every Muslim is this
mystery concealed;

Let the eyes of all the peoples till the
very end of time

Testify to the great wonder, 'We have
made thy name sublime.'

The black region of the globe, that pupil of the eye of earth,

The same homeland where your martyrs were forever born and bred,

Fertile Crescent, warmed and cherished by the sun to joy and mirth,

That its lovers call Bilal's land, for it knew his holy tread,

Is like mercury a-tremble at the echo of his name

That illuminates the darkness as it were a plunging flame.

Thou hast Reason for thy buckler, and thy sword is Love Divine;
So accoutred, my brave dervish, seize the world beneath thy sway.
'God is Greatest'—all but God consume with this bright flame of thine;
Thou a Muslim art, and Destiny thy edict must obey.

Be thou faithful to Muhammad, and We yield Ourself to thee;
Not this world alone—the Tablet and the Pen thy prize shall be.

NOTES

Our habit to submit: The poet uses the word *taslim* (surrender), which derives from the same root as the word Islam. He is thinking of the reputation of Muslims for resigning themselves to Kismet.

Undiffused the scent: It needed the missionaries of Islam to reveal to mankind the eternal nature of God.

Seljuks .... Turanians: Tribes of early Turks inhabiting Central Asia. The Seljuks later became converted to Islam.

In Europe's churches: Iqbal is thinking in particular of the Muslim occupation of Spain, but he also has in mind the conversion of the cathedral of St. Sophia in Byzantium into the Aya Sofya mosque of

Istanbul. The Arab occupation of Sicily is also remembered.

Shattered idols: Perhaps the career of Mahmud of Ghazna is especially intended, and his famous destruction of the Hindu temple at Somnath, which earned him the name of *But-shikan* (idol-breaker).

Thy Unity: The word in the original is *Tauhid,* the Muslim doctrine that God is One.

Yazdan: The Principle of Good in Zoroastrian belief, opposed by Ahriman, the Principle of Evil.

Allahu Akbar: The *takbir* or proclamation that "God is Greatest".

He is God, the One: The poet quotes in Arabic from Sura CXII of the Koran.

The people of Hejaz: Islam began its career in the Arabian province of Hejaz.

Ayaz the slave: The favourite of Mahmud of Ghazna.

The Ocean of the Shadows: The remote sea at the end of the earth famed in the Legend of Alexander.

The houris and the palaces: Symbols of the reward for faithfulness promised to Muslims. The infidels are pictured as receiving this reward in the present life, whereas the Muslims have to wait to gain it in Paradise.

The saki: The winebearer. If the Muslims vanish from the earth, there will no longer be anyone to pass the winecup containing the Muslim Message.

Laila .... Qais: The *dramatis personae* of the celebrated love-story of old Arabia.

Ahmad: Another name for the Prophet Muhammad.

Salman .... Qarani: Famous early followers of Islam.

Bilal the Abyssinian: Formerly a slave, he became one of the closest

Companions of the Prophet and was his favourite muezzin.

Qibla-pointing: The Qibla is the direction of Mecca towards which Muslims turn in their prayers.

The summit of Faran: A hill outside Mecca.

The vale of Nejd: The district of Arabia where Qais, now mad and in chains, wandered in his passion to behold Laila once more.

Laila's litter: Laila is pictured as riding in a howdah on a camel, like all Arab women on a journey.

The ant of little substance: In Sura XXVII of the Koran we are told that Solomon in all his glory passed through the Valley of the Ants, and that the spectacle was so terrifying that one of the ants urged the others to scurry into their holes for fear of being crushed.

Guardian Rizwan: The Gardener of Paradise.

Unto whom the Angels bowed: The Koran teaches that God, after creating Adam, caused the Angels to bow down before him.

Quality and Quantity: Iqbal's symbols for philosophical and scientific knowledge.

Azar's name: Azar, the father of Abraham, was an idolater.

Sinai's fires: The reference is to the fire Moses sought before God spoke to him on Mount Sinai. See especially Sura VII of the Koran.

Holy fasting: The Muslim obligation to fast in the month of Ramadan.

Ghazali's lectures: Ghazali (d. 505/1111) attacked the insufficiency of philosophy in his famous *Tahafut-al-falasifa* ("Incoherence of the Philosophers"). In his many writings he taught a mystical theology of Islam.

Ali's poverty: Ali (Haidar in the

original), the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, was the fourth Caliph of Islam and was famous for his ascetic way of life.

Uthman's wealth: Uthman was the third Caliph, during whose rulership great riches flowed into the state treasuries from the conquered provinces.

A garden fair would grow: The reference is to the miraculous transformation into a bed of roses of the fiery furnace into which Nimrod threw Abraham.

Thou a Joseph art: The Prophet Joseph during his long sojourn in Egypt still remembered his homeland of Canaan. To the true Muslim, every country, wherever he may find himself, is his Canaan, because Islam is universal.

The bell's compelling sound: Before an eastern caravan departs, a bell is tolled to summon the travellers.

The story of the Tartar horde: The Tartar invaders, who devastated the eastern provinces of Islam, afterwards accepted conversion and became great defenders of the Faith.

The Bulgars: The reference has been explained in the Preface.

We have made thy name sublime: Iqbal quotes in the original Arabic from Sura XCIV of the Koran, where God is addressing the Prophet Muhammad.

Fertile Crescent: The Crescent is the heraldic symbol of Islam.

The Tablet and the Pen: The reference is to the Heavenly Tablet and the Heavenly Pen, symbols of all wisdom and all power.

THE END